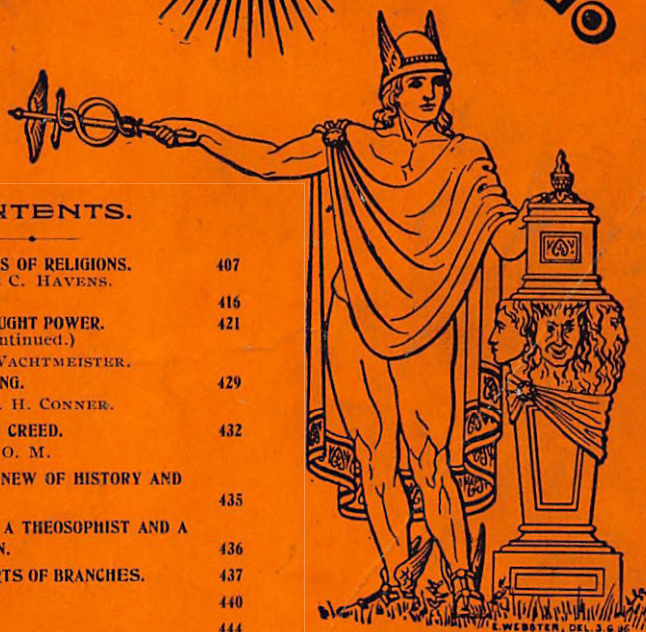


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DEVOTED TO
THE STUDY OF THEOSOPHY, ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY,
THE OCCULT SCIENCES AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

ISSUED MONTHLY.

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, - - - - - Managing Editor.

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PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.



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To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

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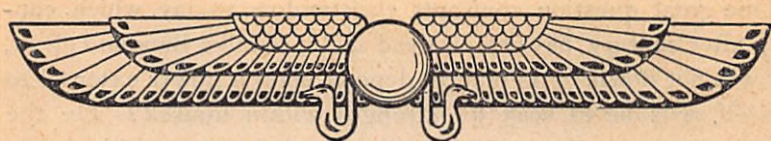
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MERCURY

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THEOSOPHY THE BASIS OF RELIGIONS.

✓ THE principles upon which Theosophy rests, lie at the root of all religions. It is antagonistic to none, but is the synthesis of all. It is essentially an exponent, not an opponent. The current erroneous opinion that Theosophy is antagonistic to the teachings of Jesus, is largely due to the fact that the average humanity fails to grasp a philosophy so broad that it can include and reconcile apparently contradictory beliefs, and also to the belief among the majority that the system of religious thought now known as christianity and the teachings of Jesus are synonymous. They are not. There is almost as much difference—not quite, because, try as he may, the oriental can never, at heart, be a materialist—between the teachings of the Buddha and what we know as popular Buddhism, as there is between the teachings of Jesus and what we call orthodox christianity. In both instances the "spirit" has been lost and the "letter" alone retained. The great mission of Theosophy is to vivify and reawaken the "spirit" in both religions, and to show that they, as well as all other systems of religion, are merely branches of the same great spiritual tree, streams that flow from the same great spiritual source. The brotherhood of religions must be demonstrated, if the brotherhood of man is ever to be realized.

One great question confronts christendom to-day, which, century after century, has been waived aside; but like Banquo's ghost, "it will not down." Is man to depend upon a power external to himself, or is he to seek for strength within himself? On the correct answer to this problem will depend the rate of his future progress.

✓ After eighteen hundred years of christianity, let us glance back over the field and see how far man has progressed towards the ideal set before him by Jesus. Let us see how near he comes to fulfilling the conditions laid down by him as a test of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." No religious persecution, no trials for heresy, no bloody wars, no antagonism; but "love one to another." Tested by this standard—and it is the one laid down by Jesus himself—*christianity is a failure!* Let us try to be candid and acknowledge it! Glancing over the field of religious thought to-day, what do we see? We see it as a field of combat; rival religions, rival creeds, rival sects, rival churches.

✓ If Theosophy is to be but one more combatant, but another rival sect, it can well be spared! But the Wisdom Religion does not enter the arena clad in the armour of a warrior, but in the soft flowing robes of an angel of peace. With arms outstretched in benediction, her face beaming with compassion, listen to her words: "However men approach me, even so do I accept them; for the path men take from every side is mine." Truth must be sought for in coöperation; it cannot be perceived while the air is rife with conflict, obscure and murky with hatred. Our ears are deafened by the clash of rival opinions; our sight is obscured by the flash of weapons; only in the clear, pure air of brotherhood and mutual respect can spiritual truths be perceived. What divides men in religion is merely a surface difference, a difference in method of expression, in the "intellectual moulds," so to say, into which the same spiritual truths have been poured. It is these "intellectual moulds" which differ according to national tradition, race and stage of development. When all religions have been stripped of those accretions, due to ignorance, we find underlying all the same basic truths; we hear struck again and again the same moral and spiritual keynotes. It is only the infinite variations of the melody which prevent all but the trained

ear from distinguishing the same sublime harmonies running through all.

All religions alike proclaim the one eternal self-existence—the root and fount of all. Whether we say Ahura-Mazda, Brahmâ, the Logos, or the Word, it matters not. Under different phases, this thought lies at the root of all religions. Yet, even as late as the beginning of the present century, christendom regarded this conception as peculiar to itself; an exception, however, being made in favor of the Jews (God's chosen (?) people)! With this one exception, all mankind was supposed to be in total darkness—given over to false gods—and their only hope of salvation lay in the possibility that these “chosen” people might bring them the “message.” In view of the researches of antiquarians, the recovery of records of past civilizations, the translations of eastern scriptures, such an absurd and distorted conception of antiquity is no longer possible to any educated mind. Mighty religions, sublime philosophies, pure ethics, great practical achievements have been brought to light; and now no one laying claim to any real knowledge can deny that India, China, Persia and Egypt have much to teach us. We are beginning to realize that what we have heretofore contemptuously termed “heathen nations,” are the storehouses of vast knowledge; that the cradle of the ancient Aryans was rocked by mighty sages, blessed by lofty saints. Neither for nations nor for individuals is intellectual arrogance synonymous with intellectual stature. It is the wise who listen the most readily to thoughts the most alien to their own, since they realize that thus they are able to catch some new aspect of the universal truth.

✓ At the root of all religions lie the following main spiritual verities, the verities upon which Theosophy rests, viz: 1st—One eternal, infinite, incognizable Existence; 2nd—From That (the Unknowable), the manifested God, unfolding from unity to duality, from duality to trinity; 3d—From the manifested God, many spiritual intelligences, guiding the Kosmic order; 4th—Man, a reflection of the manifested God, therefore fundamentally a trinity, his inner and real self being one with the self of the universe; 5th—His evolution by repeated incarnations, into which he is drawn by desire, and from which he is set free by knowledge, becoming divine in potency as he has ever been divine in latency.

The religion of the future must be inclusive, not exclusive; and here, in the summing up of the basic principles which underlie all religions, we find that all-embracing religion which the world is beginning to demand. It includes Pantheism and Monotheism; it satisfies alike the intellect of the sage and the yearnings of the infant soul reaching out for help to its personal God. Western Pantheism has failed to supply this need of the growing soul; it has left man hopeless in the immensity of the God-pervaded universe; helpless amid the ocean of infinity.

Man, as we see him to-day, cannot be the final product of all those mighty past civilizations. According to the law of analogy, there must be "beings as far beyond us, as we are beyond the black beetle," suggests Huxley. In every religion, in every great scheme of ancient cosmogony, behind and higher than the creative Deity, there is still a superior power, a supreme architect, of whom the creative Deity is but the executive agent. Then, higher still, over and around, within and without, there is the Unknowable, the Rootless Root, the cause of all these emanations. While the Christian glibly and flippantly speaks of *his* God, the Hindu, with bowed head, reverently speaks of *That*, which cannot even be named, since a name implies a limitation.

Turning to that ancient religion of China, Taoism, we read: "The great Tao has no bodily form, but it produced and nourishes heaven and earth." This expresses the thought of unity of source. The unfolding from unity to duality, from duality to trinity, is expressed thus: "The Tao produced one; one produced two; two produced three; three produced all things." Taoism regards man as a trinity. In the Ching Chang Ching, we find: "Now the spirit of man loves purity, but his mind disturbs it; the mind of man loves stillness, but his desires draw it away. If he would send away his desires, his mind would of itself become still. Let his mind be made clean, and his spirit of itself becomes pure." So the understanding of the Tao (viz: "seeking the self," "finding the way"), depended on absolute purity. Jesus only reiterated that ancient thought when he said: "Unless ye become as little children (viz: regain the state of pristine purity), ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

The idea of intelligences below the creator is too well known even to mention, as the name of Chinese gods is legion. We

must not, however, lose sight of the fact that what we see now in China and India, is not the ancient faith in its pristine purity, but its perversion, its degradation. The ancient teaching of reincarnation has been distorted into transmigration, and now the entity is supposed to range throughout the animal as well as the human kingdoms.

If we turn to that most ancient of all Aryan religions, Brahmanism, we find this image of the Rootless Root expressed as Parabrahm—that which is back of Brahm. Then the trinity, Trimurti, is expressed concretely as Brahmâ-Vishnu-Shiva, and abstractly as Sat-Chit-Ananda, (being, consciousness, bliss). From the Trimurti proceed the powers connected with the universe, the gods. Man is considered as a reflection of the manifested God, consequently potentially divine. It is unnecessary to mention reincarnation in connection with either Brahmanism or Buddhism, as it is the very foundation stone of both religions. The ancient caste system was founded on the idea of the soul in different stages of development, the Brahmin being the man in his last body. He had broken all the fetters of desire which draw the soul back to rebirth. He had, so to say, finished his earthly education, and was now engaged in teaching and helping his younger and weaker brothers. He was the true spiritual teacher. This system embodied the thought expressed by the Nazarene that "to whom much is given much is expected." Increased knowledge implied only increased power for service, not a haughty and exclusive selfishness, such as is exhibited by the Brahmin of to-day. We must not forget that the caste system of to-day is but the perversion, the degradation, of that ancient system founded on science and knowledge.

If we glance at ancient Zoroastrianism, we find the Unknowable imaged as boundless space (Zero-ana-Akerna), whence arises the creator (Ahura-Mazda). From the creator were produced two primeval causes, which, although different, yet when united produced the world of material things. They were called "The Twins," and were everywhere present in Ahura-Mazda, and in man. One produced reality, the other non-reality. The idea of reincarnation is not found in modern Zoroastrianism. The modern Parsî has drifted into materialism. We find, however, the idea of the spirit in man, as a "spark" that is to become a

flame and finally to be united to the divine fire. This, in the ancient teachings, implied a development, for which reincarnation was a necessity. The ancient faith knew nothing of the materialism which has crept into its sublime teachings, and which places, as does christianity, God at one extremity of the universe and man at the other, an immense gap of bare and empty space between them. In the ancient faith there was no empty space, no place where there were not living intelligences. From man at the base of the ladder, to the supreme God at its head, there were intelligences growing higher and higher, diviner and diviner, and all were objects of adoration.

Turning now to ancient Egypt, we find from hoariest antiquity the famous trinity, Ra-Osiris-Isis, and Horus. In no religion is this thought of "unity in essence; multiplicity in manifestation," more beautifully expressed than in the Egyptian. Listen to that sublime hymn chanted thousands of years ago: "The gods greet thee, O thou one dark truth!" Then, turning to Ra, they add: "The gods bow before thy majesty by exalting the souls of That which produces them, and say to thee, peace, to all the emanations from the unconscious father of the conscious fathers of the gods! Thou producer of beings! we adore the souls which emanate from thee! Thou begetttest us, O thou Unknown! and we greet thee in worshipping each god-soul which descendeth from thee and liveth in us!" Here, we can place the same central thought. We see the one unknown Source expressed as the "unconscious father;" and in the "conscious fathers" we can recognize the trinity—the Logoi. In the ancient Book of the Dead we can trace the pilgrimage of the soul towards the Logos.

When we examine Buddhism, we find this central thought of the one unknown Source expressed as Adi-Buddha, and the triple aspect of the Logos as Amitabha, Avaloketishwara and Manjusri, from whence proceed the gods, the powers connected with the manifested universe.

Let us take a brief glance at the Hebrew esoteric teachings, the Kabbalah. Here we find the unknown First Cause expressed as Ain-Soph; Kether, Binah, Chokmah (the crown, wisdom and the voice) forming the Triad, from whence proceed the lower Sephiroth and man. Reincarnation was distinctly taught in the Kabbalah, and traces of it are found in both Hebrew and Christian

exoteric scriptures. Take the passage in the 139th Psalm: "My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes didst see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." The Hebrews held the doctrine of many gods: "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord among the gods!" (Ex. XV-2), and also of subordinate spirits—"Sons of God," "angels of the Lord" and the "ten angelic Hosts."

✓ Coming down to later times, we find the same thought in christian scriptures. There is a very definite passage, which is omitted by the latest revisers, who regard it as a "monkish gloss" that has crept in, and consequently have rejected this very important passage: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One." A prominent christian (Catholic) theologian has pointed out that as the word person comes from "persona," meaning mask, the three persons of the trinity imply the three-faced unity, behind which is the "hidden God," the one unknown reality. Reincarnation was taught in the early christian church, until stamped as a heresy by a council held after the reign of mental and spiritual darkness had set in. With the doctrine of reincarnation went that of Karma, cause and effect, as the one is meaningless without the other. Hence the emphatic declaration of the law, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be meted unto you again," gradually became a dead letter in the church, the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, grossly misunderstood, seeming to offer an escape. Thus we have various schemes to enable man to evade the penalty of his own wrong-doing. The doctrine of Karma, absolute justice, "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," does not appeal to weak natures who prefer to shift the responsibility of their misdeeds on to the shoulders of Jesus.

In Rev. III-12, we read: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out;" viz: "no more out" to rebirth. This is identical with the teachings of the Buddha, viz: that overcoming desires, controlling the out-going energies, gives freedom from rebirth.

✓ That a belief in reincarnation was current at the time Jesus taught, must be apparent even to the most superficial student

who is not blinded by prejudice. Jesus declares that John the Baptist is Elias, "and they knew him not." In the sermon on the mount we have a very definite teaching of both Karma and reincarnation; "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not pass out of thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing," teaching the Karmic ties which draw the soul back to rebirth. This passage is meaningless unless read in the light of esoteric knowledge, when it becomes luminous.

✓ So we see the contemptuous epithet "heathen" cannot consistently be applied to these doctrines of Karma and reincarnation. We hear Jesus constantly affirming a power superior to his, the Father in heaven, and yet as constantly affirming his identity with this power: "the Father and I are one;" "if ye have seen me ye have seen the Father." It is the failure of the multitude to grasp the meaning of the thought which he intended to convey, that thought which is at the root of all religions, which is the very corner stone of Theosophy and the scientific basis of the theory of universal brotherhood, viz: "Unity in essence; multiplicity in manifestation," which has led to such a distortion of his sublime teachings and has divided christianity into hundreds of warring sects.

Every religion has its "divine incarnations," its "Word made flesh;" and in all religions this incarnation is styled "the Christ," and around this ideal man the hearts of men have instinctively clung. There is a passage of tremendous significance in the Bhagavad Gita, which declares: "When there is decay of Dharma, law, and exaltation of Adharma, disorder, then I, myself, come forth." Thus the world's history proves that at certain periods, those of great mental and spiritual unrest, there has always appeared a great teacher, one of those divine incarnations.

✓ The answer which Jesus gives to the charge of blasphemy is conclusive proof that he taught the divinity inherent in man. He claims to rank as God, because he is man, and divinity is inherent in humanity. "Is it not written in your scriptures, 'I said ye are gods?' If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scriptures cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest!' because I said I am the Son of God?" St. Paul teaches the divinity inherent in man in such words as: "My little

children, of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you." Surely this does not refer to the historical Jesus, but to the mystical Christos, the Christ principle which is latent in all humanity.

In all religions we find the teaching of the dual characteristics of the Logos. It is this which, in exoteric teachings, has assumed the form of opposing spirits of good and evil, light and darkness, spirit and matter, the fundamental twins of the universe. In all religions, we find this struggle of the soul to reach and unite itself with the Logos; we find that immortality is not "a something" with which man is at first endowed, but something which he must achieve through conflict with and conquest over matter.

The great mission of Theosophy is to unify all religions, to show that there is a brotherhood of religions. It is only by a loving and sympathetic study of all religions that we gain the clue to the religious evolution of mankind.

The great scientists, M. Louis Figuier and Herbert Spencer, have independently arrived at conclusions from which they have deduced the same axiom. I quote the thought in the words of M. Figuier: "A tradition which has a uniform and universal existence, has all the weight of scientific testimony." Therefore, to the careful student of comparative religions, the fact that they all spring from a common source has "all the weight of scientific testimony."

KATE C. HAVENS.

NOTE—The materials for this article have been taken from "Ancient Wisdom," "Four Great Religions," and "Christianity in the Light of Theosophy," by Mrs. Besant. K. C. H.

THE JUDGMENT BOOK.

The book was opened; men in wonder stood !
 No record kept of wrong ! It told of good—
 Each deed of love ! A soul crept up in fright,
 Then passed into the dark—*his page was white.*

Clarence Urmy.

REINCARNATION. *

Yet, I doubt not, through the ages one unceasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

Tennyson.

It has been said by a great philosopher that a little learning inclines a man to atheism, but deep study usually makes him a Christian. This same rule may be applied to many of the questions of the day, as well as to christianity and the idea of reincarnation.

When we first begin to regard the latter as a possible fact, we are repelled. It is not pleasant to think we must return after death to again be burdened with a body and subjected to its desires and limitations. We would prefer to be rewarded or punished (unless we can manage to escape the punishment in some miraculous way) in some other manner; it is difficult to say just how—but not through the flesh.

We wish to be able to sow seed in one place and reap the results in another, and sometimes we even hope to plant weeds and nettles in one place, and afterwards gather, somewhere else, roses from the very plants which sprang from the nettle and weed seeds. But there is a book which says: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, and he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

And not alone are we repelled, at first, by the idea of reincarnation—but it seems absurd, peculiar, and even ridiculous. And why? An idea is peculiar or singular when but few people accept it—and to-day there are, living on this little world, over eight hundred millions of people who accept this doctrine.

We are all the unamazed witnesses of one kind of reincarnation. Webster defines the word incarnation as meaning "the act of taking, or being manifested in, a human body; the act of clothing with flesh." And as *re* signifies again, the word means the re-clothing of the spirit in a human body. There is no hint, according to Webster, that the change must necessarily be a sudden one. The Theosophical teaching, however, is that it means the

* A paper read before Aloha Branch, T. S., Honolulu, at the White Lotus Day celebration, May 8th, 1898, by Lilian Shrewsbury Mesick, F. T. S.

abrupt beginning of one earth life, following the abrupt termination of another on the Devachanic plane.

Our bodies are constantly changing, constantly being reclothed with flesh, constantly being renewed by what we eat, drink, the air we breathe, etc., and as the new is assimilated, the worn-out and useless is cast away; so at the end of about every seven years we have reincarnated—for there is no part of the old body left, so science says. This statement many people are inclined to accept as a fact, and at the same time they ridicule the idea as taught by Theosophy. Why should the idea of an abrupt reincarnation be considered absurd or ridiculous, when we know the gradual reincarnation to be a scientific fact?

John Smith, at sixty years of age, is very unlike what he was when a child of four. Of course the general form and features are somewhat similar—but perhaps no more so than John Smith at sixty and John Smith's little grandson at four years. His surroundings have entirely changed during the last fifty years; his companions are not the same; he has different desires, different ambitions, different emotions, in fact, he is apparently another person, for he has another body, and the world has changed about him. Is he the same individual he was more than half a century ago? Yes. Why? Well, because he is still called John Smith. He has the same name, but that is all the resemblance we can discover with our five senses. From the material standpoint, he is not the same person at all. And yet there is that something which shines forth like a pure diamond in a tarnished setting. That something is the real man, the divine spirit, the self, which has gradually incarnated, or been clothed with flesh, several times during his sixty years.

The doctrine of reincarnation is objected to by many persons because they cannot grasp the idea that the spirit of man is the real man. If the spirit occupies another body, it must be, in their eyes, another individual; and the doubter can see no reason for self-denial, if the next time he returns to earth he will be "another person." But would the person who asks the question willingly run the risk of becoming a leper, although that disease does not usually manifest itself for seven years, and, as he would have another body by that time, would he not be "another person?" He would not run that risk, but he is willing to carry the

disease of evil deeds, and all the other fruits of selfishness, from one earth life to another.

The Theosophist cannot believe we are here simply as the result of some unexplained "chance." Neither can he accept the idea expressed by one of the articles in the "Confession of Faith" of one of the prominent churches, which says: "By the decree of God, and for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death." We cannot believe the one who "doeth all things well," is more cruel, wanton and egotistical than man.

"And the soul, in doubt, through the mind looks out on the shifting scenes of life;

And longs to know, as the sad days go, the meaning of the strife."

We are here for a purpose, and we believe it to be to allow an opportunity for the spirit, by "taking on the garment of the flesh" and feeling its longings and temptations, to learn, while still in the flesh, to overcome them. And not until we have known all the various experiences of mortal life, and learned how unsatisfying they are, will we really long for a spiritual existence; and only from personal experience comes knowledge.

If, then, we are here to gain experience, we must acknowledge, unless we believe in reincarnation, that the creator has made a sad mistake, for how is it possible for an infant, who lives but a few minutes, to gain experience enough to fit it for an eternity of happiness or misery? And if some souls do not require an earth experience, why should the rest of us be compelled to take up our abode in this so called "vale of tears?"

We do not believe the act of death changes our spiritual condition, except to free the spirit from the body for a time; and it is impossible that the mere separation of the spirit from the body can make a weak nature strong, or an evil one noble. If that were possible, then, since all must die, all would be alike, thus defeating the very purpose of earth-life, for we would have gained nothing by it.

The doctrine of reincarnation alone explains the seeming injustices we are always observing. What right has the creator to give one person a life of luxury and love, from birth till death, and doom another to a life of temptation amid squalid misery, if neither has lived before? Would it be just for the one, who has known no strong temptation, to inherit everlasting happiness, and

the other, taught and compelled to sin, to receive eternal death? We believe that, as surely as the sun rises in the east, the spirit, when it begins a new earth-life, will do so amid conditions made by it in past incarnations.

For the Theosophist, there is no vicarious atonement, and many people object to Theosophy on that account. It is the old cry of: "Ye have taken away my gods and what have I left?" They feel their weaknesses, but desire to depend upon someone else, rather than "work out their own salvation." Reincarnation is the doctrine of eternal justice. No one can shield another from the results of his evil deeds; neither can anyone lessen the rewards due a good man, or intensify the punishment of the wicked man beyond what he deserves.

No one can avoid the consequences of bad deeds through suicide. "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all shall be fulfilled." We cannot avoid the results of our actions in this or some past incarnation, and though the suicide may rid himself of a diseased or crippled body, or escape from unpleasant surroundings or uncongenial companions, his material triumph can be but momentary, for he must surely come back to exactly the same conditions. And Theosophy further teaches that the conditions he makes for himself on the "other side," until he again incarnates, are far from pleasant.

There is no place in the great universe where the despairing soul can escape from the causes it has set in motion. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me." Is there then no escape? Yes, for if reincarnation is the doctrine of eternal justice, it is also the doctrine of eternal love. We reap what we sow. We are continually reaping what we have sown in the past, and we are doing more. We are sowing good and evil, and we will surely reap good and evil at some future time, and "with what judgment ye judge shall ye be judged, and with what measure ye mete shall it be meted

to you again."

And so the Imperishable passes on from one earth-life to another, seeking to appease the longings of the soul with purely material food, and so he incarnates again and yet again, till as time rolls on, he shall learn to distinguish between the real and the unreal, and instead of being a slave of the body he shall make the body the servant of his higher nature. For not until he has conquered the body and the desires of the flesh, will he be prepared for, or satisfied with, a purely spiritual existence. The man who becomes desperate, because the results of his past actions seem more than he can bear, or at least more than he wants to bear, would be glad to live if the object he despairs of receiving could be given him. Give him the wealth or power he longs for, or the health he has forfeited through misuse of the body in the past, or give him the ones he has loved and lost, or free him from the sharp stings of conscience, and would he court oblivion? It is not that he tires of earth-life, but he despairs because he desires more of it than he can get.

We have the highest incentive for leading helpful, conscientious lives, for when we realize that the future depends absolutely on ourselves, that we will get exactly what we give, we will sow carefully. We may seem victims, but the battle-ground is within; and we shall become victors, for we are absolute masters of our own destinies.

"We shape ourselves the joy or fear of which the coming life is made;
And fill our future's atmosphere with sunshine or with shade.
Still shall the soul around it call the shadows which it gathers here,
And, painted on the eternal wall, the past shall reappear."

The great evil of the age is selfishness. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "The day selfishness vanishes from the world, the millennium will have dawned." But we are now students in the great school of experience; and if our lofty ideals of true brotherhood are sometimes overshadowed by that selfish consideration that makes one's own interest seem the all important thing, we shall learn to recognize in each individual a spark of the divine light which "illumineth the world," and, conscious of our kinship with all humanity, we will more fully understand the meaning of life. In no other way can we hope for the consummation of that ideal dream of the ages—the reign of universal brotherhood—and

that interdependence Whittier mentioned, when he said of the Quaker of olden time :

With that deep insight which detects all great things in the small,
And knows how each man's life affects the spiritual life of all,
He felt that wrong with wrong partakes, that nothing stands alone—
That whoso gives the motive, makes his brother's sin his own.

MEDITATION AND THOUGHT POWER.

(Continued from July number.)

The Hindus regulate their efforts and exercises in accordance with the phases of the moon; yet only in such meditations as immediately concern a particular development of their powers. They maintain that the moon exerts special influence over the psychic faculties of man.

They consider that the best time to begin the concentration of thought, is at the new moon, or during the moon's first quarter. The initiation takes place during a fast, in order to strengthen and protect the body against injurious influences. The idea that abstinence from all food fortifies the body, and through that the soul, is perfectly correct from the standpoint of the occultist, as all lower astral organisms and elementals receive their nourishment at the same time as the physical body, and their parasitical life, always at man's expense, is one of the greatest hindrances in the way of development. Go a step higher, and according to the occultist, another set of psychic elementals is encountered, which are nourished by unwholesome and kamic thoughts.

Thus it becomes absolutely necessary that during meditation we should not foster and maintain thoughts which are likely to attract these inhabitants of the astral world. The evil or hurtful influence which through the moon menaces mankind, is said to follow the so-called dark rays, that is to say, those radiations of that part of the moon's atmosphere which does not come in direct contact with the sun's rays. The bright rays of the moon, those which are a reflection of the light of the sun, are in consequence considered to be beneficial.

Therefore, between the new and the full moon, the meditating student should devote some time, morning and evening, to his meditation, and during that quarter when the bright rays are most intense, his efforts should at the same time be increased; but when the full moon appears, he should make a final uplifting aspiration, followed by a fast of twenty-four hours, and this, in proportion to the degree attained of purity of body and soul, renders it possible that the highest impressions might be retained. During the two last quarters, when the moon is "on the wane," meditation should never be advanced, for, according to the Hindus, that would be to make oneself susceptible to all kinds of psychic dangers, but it should concern us more to try to retain that which we have already acquired, so as not to slip back; for a fresh foundation cannot be laid before the next change of the moon.

In the Bhagavad Gita, there is a verse which shows how much importance the Hindus attach to the influence of the bright rays of the moon. "He who, recognizing the highest spirit, goes forth during the fourteen days of the increase of the moon, he goes to the highest." This verse has even a deeper significance. There is an ancient Indian saying, the substance of which is the following: "When the astral form is dissolved in the rays of the sun, then is Moksha attained."

When a human being has come so far in development that his ethereal form (Karana Sarira), is no longer under material influences (those shaped by the Lunar Pitris) then it is dissolved, or absorbed into the pure spiritual sun or essence, and the spirit enters into eternity. Therefore it is said: "Happy is he who dies under the influence of the bright rays of the moon." These austere and strict meditational exercises are not practiced by the generality of people in India, but only by those who have as their standard "Sannyasins" holy and exalted state.

The meditation which is really the practice of all Hindus is the so-called Sandhaya Vandana, or "twilight devotion," because it is held at sunrise and sunset, morning and evening. But now-a-days, under the somewhat complicated conditions of our modern life, this is not always so, but it is to be noticed that the further back we search, the simpler and more elevated was this devotion. In the time of the Vedas, it consisted only in the repetition of the Gayatri hymn, and deep reflection on it afterwards. The Gay-

atri is the holiest of all the Vedic mantras, both in its meaning, and on account of the occult power produced by its intonation, It is an invocation to the sun, the spiritual sun which enlightens our hearts. Literally, it is as follows: "Let us meditate upon (worship) the glory of the divine giver of all life, and may he enlighten our understanding." It is the climax and the goal for the so-called Raja-Yoga. Anyone who has seen a tropical sunset, and who has felt the wonderful harmony which arises or prevails between the shifting colors of light and the vibrations in the ether, can well understand how the ancient Hindus were able to see in this phenomena of nature an expression of the Divine and the Unseen, and even to feel a longing to set free their souls from their earthly dwellings, in order that they might return to their original source, to Moksha, the spiritual world. Simple and high-minded in many respects, as the Veda folk themselves were, so is this their hymn.

Ever since the caste system was introduced into India, and the life of the community has become more complicated, a number of compulsory ceremonies have been added to meditation, preliminary or preparatory acts which serve the purpose of properly preparing the student. The ceremonies now most in use are said to have descended from the time when the laws of Manu were given out, but later reformers have made certain changes in them, and also some additions. The first condition to be observed before permission is given to recite the Gayatri hymn, is that the ceremony of initiation should have been undertaken. This is now only a mere form, and it consists in the conferring of "the holy thread" (Upayanana). This thread is only bestowed upon the three higher castes, and consequently it is these alone who are permitted to use the Gayatri mantra. Meditation is preceded by ablution of the body, Achamana, usually accomplished by casting a small quantity of water over the head whilst a mantra is repeated. Sometimes ablution is preceded by certain bodily exercises. In former days, gymnastics formed an essential part of the devotional practices, and one whole hour was occupied by youths in different kinds of movements of the body. Now-a-days these customs have completely gone out of use; but sometimes one may now see a Yogi practicing for hours together, with heavy clubs, in order to train his body for particular ascetic exercises.

After ablution, a concentration of the will takes place (Sankalpa) accompanied by certain Hatha Yoga practices, such as Prana-yama—the inhalation of the breath through one nostril, and its exhalation through the other.

Afterwards a sacrifice or offering is made to the god Sandhya, consisting of water held out in the right hand during the repetition of a mantra. The god Sandhya is the personification of the spiritual power which presides over the twilight; it is called Chishakti, and is said to be an emanation of the Logos. Without the help of this power, Brahma cannot be reached through the Gayatri formula. This ceremony is called Arbryapradana. If meditation takes place near the bank of a river, flowers are thrown in as a propitiatory offering to the god under whose protection it is (if it is the Ganges, to the river goddess Ganga).

All these preparatory ceremonies, with their corresponding mantras, help to place the student in a magnetic rapport with all the forces of nature in the psychic and astral worlds, through which his will must pass, so as to finally, in the Gayatri, rise up above them all. Another custom in meditation is, in the morning the face is turned towards the east, at mid-day it is indifferent, and in the evening to the west; and there are special mantras for the presiding Maharajas. It is generally only the Brahmins who completely perform these ceremonies; the lower castes have others less complicated, taken from the Puranas; these are the so-called Tantric ceremonies, whereas the above-mentioned are called Vedic. When all those ceremonies have been performed, then the student at last repeats the Gayatri formula, "sitting in a perfectly pure and clean place," as the Bhagavad Gita directs, "neither too high, nor too low, upon a mat of Kushagrass." With the mind fixed or one-pointed, that is to say with undivided attention, the formula is repeated, as softly as possible, so as to be almost unheard, for as long as the student considers suitable. After meditation, a gift of flowers, rice, etc., is made to that divinity under whose special protection the student places himself; nearly every Yogi is under the guidance of Shivas—Maha Yogins. The mid-day meditation is not supposed to be so important, and is often omitted; but with this exception it may truly be said that amongst all the Hindu castes, except the very lowest, the daily meditation at the present time is carried out

just as regularly as it was a thousand years ago. This is especially the case with regard to the Brahmins, for if they omit meditation they are liable to punishment by fines, and may at the same time lose their caste, which they can only regain through a long series of penances at Benares, or some other holy locality. Briefly put, this is the daily meditation; but besides this there are other special kinds for those who wish to devote themselves wholly and entirely to spiritual development. There are two periods in the life of a Hindu, during which his thoughts and actions are directed more towards the invisible than the visible world. The first period is from his 12th to his 24th year, his years of education, when he, as Brahmacharya, devotes himself altogether to his studies, particularly those of the holy writings or books, under the direction of a Guru. This is a question of the young Brahmins alone; the lower castes are generally not in a position to give so long a time to learning and contemplation, neither are they permitted to study the books of the Vedas. The next period, when the thoughts are again directed towards the divine, is when old age commences. After the duties of family life (*grihastha*) have been fulfilled (amongst the Hindus it is considered a duty to enter into marriage), and when the children are grown up and able to take care of themselves, it often happens that the aged parents leave their homes, so that they may, in solitude, devote themselves to meditation and Yoga. Like the Brahmacharyan, during his wandering, so also do these live upon alms, which the Hindus never neglect to bestow upon those of their fellow creatures who lead the ascetic life. The women as well, often follow their husbands in order to devote themselves to contemplation. It appears to be a very judicious arrangement, that when a Hindu's best days are over, and when his strength is no longer such as to render him capable of working his best for his fellow creatures, he shall then withdraw himself from the world to lead a life of great simplicity and contemplation, and thereby furnish a good example to the younger generation. In ancient times, it was a rule amongst the Hindus that aged persons, especially, should lead an ascetic life, and nearly all the Sannyasis and Yogis in those days were old people. Now, the case is quite otherwise. It often happens that a young man, after he has gone through his years of education as a Brahmacharya,

becomes a Yogi, and at the present day one sees numbers of ascetics—so-called Swamis—wandering in the streets of Benares, in their yellow mantles, with their wasted forms and emaciated features, undergoing all the severest forms of asceticism and abstinence.

When the warm, youthful blood is flowing in their veins, and the powers and forces of life are at their strongest, I wonder whether it can be consistent with the order of nature to cut off all feelings and diminish the bodily strength through asceticism, especially through the dangerous Hatha-Yoga practices? For some exceptionally endowed natures, it may be wise, even in their youth, to become true Yogis, but the greater number are not equal to overcoming the tremendous difficulties; and it is also to be regretted that the asceticism practiced by many of the younger Yogis is only the asceticism of the body; the soul, the most important, remains undeveloped, and the consequence of this unnatural kind of life is that both intelligence and morality are weakened, and occasionally it also happens that the light of reason is entirely extinguished. Amongst thinking Hindus, the Hatha-Yoga system holds only a secondary place, and it is never undertaken except by the direction of an experienced Guru. Here in the west, such practices are distinctly injurious, as our bodies have not been trained, like those of the Hindus, through centuries of Yoga practice, which is quite the opposite to our flesh-eating, materialistically inclined bodily habits. Such practices would probably, for us, have a most deplorable result, and the elementals would mercilessly ravage and rule, and work terrible havoc in our poor physical tabernacles. Besides those practices which are peculiar to the Hatha-Yoga system, there are some others which are necessary during concentration, but if these are not used cautiously they become most injurious. I have already mentioned the danger which arises from allowing feeling to attain too great power, a case which is, as a rule, unfortunately only too common with us, and which, if carried to extremes, leads to hysteria and religious frenzy. But even if feeling is carefully kept in the background, and not allowed to influence, a danger always exists if thought is prolonged through a too sharp and lengthened concentration. It is, so to say, thus possible to hypnotize oneself fixedly to a certain condition. During intense concentration and all-ab-

sorbing contemplation, a cataleptic condition may result, through which the will becomes entirely paralyzed, and either the influence desired will gain the ascendancy, or an unknown and altogether extraneous power or agency will prevail. The first case is the least dangerous, at any rate when the influence is a good one; but the last creates precisely the opposite of what should be the aim in concentration, namely, the strengthening of the will; for in this case a person is in danger of becoming a passive medium, and a prey to all sorts of evil influences. Therefore, it becomes absolutely necessary, in both meditation and concentration, to avoid all exaggerations and extremes, and to strive, instead, that a perfectly harmonious condition shall exist between all our faculties, so that thought and feeling, reason and will, shall keep even steps, one with the other, and as Krishna has said; "raise the self through the Self," the lower through the higher, so as gradually to become free from all worldly desire; and in this way to hold thought steadily open, so that all impressions, if they are in the slightest degree disturbed, will not then be liable to cast a shadow upon the soul. And further, is there not a condition which thought cannot reach? Does not the neophyte, in his pilgrimage, come to a stream which he cannot cross by himself alone, where higher capacities are needed in order to be able to go forward, to be able to behold that which to our ordinary human senses cannot be revealed? What is the aim in view in that Indian scripture, where it is written that we become "released from our thoughts;" or, in other words, in what relation does Manas stand to Buddhi, when Atma prevails?

What is the condition, by many called "ecstatic," when the soul raises itself above its earthly fetters and gazes into the divine? What does it mean, that sentence in our scripture: "The pure in heart shall see God"? Is that a condition which can be likened to catalepsy, as certain authors—blind and without intuition—would have us believe? Is not the difference between these two states as great as that between heaven and earth? Most assuredly such a high condition can be reached, where a new sense or consciousness has its beginning, of which very few people have as yet even the slightest notion.

In the Dresden gallery, there is a celebrated picture by Rubens, representing an old hermit sitting in his cave, absorbed in

contemplation of God. It is perfectly wonderful how truthfully the artist has depicted that harmony of the soul to which the hermit has attained. He has left behind him all earthly thoughts, and a new kingdom, God's kingdom, opens before him, and, as it were, shines out from his eyes, so full of a mild and harmonious inspiration. The deeply furrowed brow reveals the thinker, and one comprehends that this is a divine sage, a Theosophist, to use a much misrepresented word, who is ready to enter into the eternal kingdom.

Meditation is but one of the means through the use of which such a condition can be attained, but as such, if it is rightly employed, it ought always to possess its due importance and significance, especially when the mind is never allowed to waver. But the effects, although they may be outwardly imperceptible, may nevertheless be perceived, though faintly, by the meditating student. In "Light on the Path," it says that just as the flower emerges or opens out its bud, so is the growth of the soul; that is to say, the true development takes place unconsciously, without the self being aware of the inestimable treasure it is gathering. Other people may perceive its existence, and rejoice at the blessings which it everywhere brings with it; but for ourselves it is often a secret. And it is well that it should be so, for otherwise it might happen that we would be proud of the possession of such a glorious treasure and be boastful over it, and in the moment that we did so, it would be lost. But some day it must come out into the light, so that we may be able to see it, and that day, for many of us, will bring the greatest trial of all. For each must learn this lesson, that the much longed-for treasure can never be one's own; that it is ever turning aside and eluding one's grasp; and it is most certain that one must stand on the very brink of doubt, until at last this becomes clear, that from each is demanded the greatest sacrifice of all, the sacrifice of self.

How, then, shall this be comprehended—this absorption into God, the Buddhistic Nirvana, this idea which is found in all religions, and which in our own church is called "the kingdom of God within us"? Thought lacks the might to solve this mystery, which stands now just as much a matter for wondering and questioning as it did thousands of years ago. This much, perhaps, can be said, that there certainly must exist something higher,

which I—the Self—become, but of the essence of which I cannot now have any idea.

There is an ancient Persian story, which in a particularly poetic manner expresses this thought: A youth wandered the wide world over, in search of his beloved. At last he came to her door and knocked. "Who are you?" asked a voice from within. "It is your lover who knocks," answered the youth. But the door remained closed, and silence reigned within. With a sorrowful heart the youth turned, and went out again into the wide world. Many dangers and many sorrows he encountered, and he went so far astray, that not for a long time could he again find the path to the dwelling of his beloved. Eventually, he found it, and on knocking, he heard again the voice from within, "Who is there?" This time he answered, "It is thy self." Then the door opened, and the youth went in.

DREAMS AND DREAMING.

As an awakened interest in dreams and dreaming must necessarily be the result of recent publications upon the subject, a few words to the point will probably be acceptable, both to the psychological student and the general reader.

THE CHARACTER OF DREAMS.

Dreams are not idle fancies merely, nor imagination run riot. They are true pictures, though the truth that they embody is not always apparent. A dream may be of either a physiological or psychological character or both. The interpretation thereof will depend upon which class it belongs to. For this reason it will be difficult for anyone except the dreamer to interpret a given dream.

The dreams that have probably been the most fruitful cause of disbelief in the phenomena are those which I would term physiological.

SOME INDUCING CAUSES.

Lying in an uncomfortable position, so that breathing or the

circulation of the blood is interfered with, or a muscle strained, indigestion and other forms of illness, all serve to induce this class of dreams. Though such dreams generally portray scenes of personal danger, obviously, in their interpretation, they do not necessarily "go by contraries," or imply "bad luck."

They should be regarded rather as idle creations of the imagination, based upon a certain fact. Take, for instance, the following illustration. One or both of the lower limbs being in a cramped position, the dream will probably take some such form as a pursuit, or an attempt to escape a pursuer, while one's uttermost efforts will seem to enable one to go hardly faster than a walking gait, the limbs seeming to be like lead. Such a dream in itself would portend neither good nor bad luck, yet it would contain elements of truth.

There is another class of dreams which I have herein termed psychological, as perhaps a more acceptable title than others, which are not referable, to a great extent at least, to physical conditions. In them one becomes prescient and otherwise abnormally intelligent. Such intelligence is conveyed in either of two ways, symbolically (or typically), and antitypically. The interpretation of the latter is clearly discernible; but the former presents many difficulties.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH DREAMS.

While to most people dreams seem to be altogether erratic in character, close observation will show it to be otherwise. Though much has been written upon the subject, I would have the reader study his or her own experiences, intelligently and without prejudice towards either side, rather than depend upon books. Such a course will prove itself to be more satisfactory and valuable in the end. The higher class of dreams, merging into and including "visions," may be distinguished by certain peculiarities. There will be in them an easily perceived rational element, as, for instance, one's personality will appear with the characteristics that are observable when one is awake, in respect to marks, scars, and so on; an appreciation of the fact that one is not in the normal waking state will exist; a correct knowledge of time and place, together with existing conditions, will be apparent.

When a dream contains one or more of these factors, or similar

ones, information is very likely embodied in it that will be well worth attention and remembrance. Particularly in such dreams, even what may appear phantastic or meaningless should not be cast aside without investigation. Let it not be said that this is mere superstition, unworthy of the nineteenth century; for it is possible for nearly everyone to prove for and in himself that it is not so. Those who honestly attempt to discover the truth of the matter, will find that at times they possess an abnormal intelligence; and that these times are most liable to be when dreaming, or, if awake, when the body is at rest and the mind in the calm of a profound reverie or a state of exaltation. All three states are productive of similar effects.

HOW TO PRODUCE SLEEP AND WAKING DREAMS.

What we know or remember of dreams is confined to those that occur at the point of waking. Those that are repeated several times, or that occur after midnight, are considered of most importance. For in the latter case the mind (or brain?), having overcome, to a greater or less extent, the fatigue of the previous day, is better able to record that which passes through it. (Note that thoughts are clearer and more concise in the early part of day than late at night.) Since dreams occur at a period between sound sleep and complete wakefulness, it is obvious that to induce that state of semi-sleep will be to furnish the condition of dreaming. Hence it will appear that dreaming is not altogether beyond our control, as some have supposed. For this purpose I would recommend placing the body in a position of mild restraint. One or both hands above the head may effect this.

I say mild restraint, because that will serve to protect the period between wakefulness and sleeping, without dominating, to any considerable extent, such dreams as may occur. Nothing need be said here about that ordinary form of waking dreams, termed "day dreams," or reverie; but there is another and higher kind, to which individuals of a poetic nature are susceptible, or can be rendered so, by calmly and abstractedly gazing upon the polished surface of mirrors, so placed that they do not reflect the images of surrounding objects, thereby disconcerting one's attention, or by looking through, in like manner, crystals, etc.

It is unnecessary, at present, for me to go into details as to the

reasonableness of these methods, the plane of action involved, or the character of the results attained. It is enough if I have opened the way for an intelligent public to study and to pass judgment upon dreams and dreaming for themselves.

CHAS. H. CONNER.

EDITOR'S NOTE—The reader is advised to read also a very lucid disquisition on "Dreams," by H. P. Blavatsky, in the "Transactions of the London Blavatsky Lodge" (Vol. I), a pamphlet which deserves to be more widely known.

A RELIGION WITHOUT CREED.*

One of the most noticeable divisions into which mankind as a whole can be made, is that which would include in one class a few restless ones whose efforts seem bent towards benefiting, improving and elevating the race in some way, and in another class all the rest of the world. In the former class we would find our inventors, our artists, our leaders, our great reformers and teachers. At sundry periods of the world's history, the great ones of this class have proclaimed their ideas and promulgated their teachings, and have been misjudged and discredited by the rest of the world, which understood them not.

A quarter of a century ago, there appeared in America a woman of foreign birth, friendless and penniless. The best years of her life had been spent in the accumulation of knowledge with regard to the mystery of life—its cause, its purpose—journeying through many countries in quest of the best the world could disclose, through the ancient lore of its most ancient peoples, touching this greatest of questions.

There had long been a growing discontent among the more thoughtful professors of creeds, and among those outside of the churches there had been a tendency towards agnosticism and what was infinitely worse—gross materialism. This tendency, spreading as it did to wider and wider limits, had received no little in-

* It is suggested that members make an effort to have the above reprinted in their local papers, for the benefit of inquirers.

spiration from advanced scientific thought, whose discoveries had in so many instances shown that, when interpreted in the dead letter sense, the scriptures could not be relied upon for authority, such interpretation being so often contradicted by well established facts in nature. There was felt, therefore, a great necessity for some movement based on eternal truth, which, by throwing the light of knowledge upon the deeper mysteries of life, would check the materialistic tendency—a knowledge which would at once sustain the truths as revealed by scientific investigation and those taught by the great religions, uniting both in a bond of perfect union.

Upon reaching America, this woman began the preparation of the works which are to-day before us in the form of five large volumes, and numerous other and less pretentious writings.

The teachings contained in this monumental work, though based upon those lying concealed from lay vision within the allegorical and symbolical writings of the great philosophers and religious teachers of the past, were, in reality, given out to this strange woman by an Eastern sage, whom she had found in her interesting pilgrimages, and who showed her the key wherewith to unlock the mysteries.

It is impossible to read the teachings thus put forth and not feel that here is a philosophy which, if it could find its way into the hearts of all men, would make the world as one huge family or brotherhood, its ethics are so pure and altruistic.

Misunderstood, misrepresented, slandered and wronged as she was, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky has but suffered the consequences of living ahead of her time, and the grand philosophy—the Ancient Wisdom—thus taught through her, which could not be appreciated when it was put before the world, will, as time rolls on, find its way into the lives of the more thoughtful.

These teachings are now being promulgated by many noble-minded and devoted men and women on every continent of the globe, through the medium of the Theosophical Society, of which she and Colonel Henry S. Olcott of New York were the founders, this society being the special vehicle for the conveyance of the truths of the Ancient Wisdom to man of to-day. Its first and principal object is the formation of a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex,

caste or color, and it numbers among its members adherents to every one of the world's great religions.

Theosophy is not a "new religion." It is, indeed, without creed. But it is the essence of all religion and the basis of all science. It therefore has no fight with either science or religion. It comes simply as the peacemaker, to reconcile and harmonize the differences thought to exist, not only between them, but between the various forms of religion as well. It strives to show to the votary of each of the great religions the priceless jewels lying concealed within his own religion—in some instances, beneath the dust that selfish man has allowed to accumulate over them; in others, within the forms which he has mistaken for substance; and others still in symbols of which he has long ago forgotten the meaning.

Since the publication of Madame Blavatsky's works, Theosophical literature has made rapid growth, comprising, as it does, many luminous works by Annie Besant, A. P. Sinnett, G. R. S. Mead, and other prominent workers.

Every earnest scientific investigator, every devoted seeker for the higher spiritual life, everyone interested in the uplifting of his fellow-man to a nobler and purer life, would do well to investigate the teachings and work of this laudable and growing society, which would best be done through the elementary works—especially those written by Mrs. Besant.

Mr. Alexander Fullerton, the General Secretary of the American Section of the Society, at No. 5 University Place, New York, has been untiring in his readiness to answer all inquiries concerning the Society.

O. M.

✓ He whose heart is pure and good, who is without pride, who is mild, persevering, simple, plain; who considers every creature as his friend; who loves every soul as his own; who behaves to everyone with kindness and love; who wishes to do good; who has abandoned vanity; . . . in his heart, resides the Lord of Life.

Vishnu Purana.

What the Maoris knew of History and Creation.

At a recent meeting of the Wellington Philosophical Society, Mr. Tregear stated that "historically, beyond a few generations back from living natives, they (the genealogies), were, in his opinion, totally unreliable." In answer to this, Mr. H. M. Stowell (Hare Hongi), native interpreter, Hawera, writes an article in the Wellington Times, in which he argues for the authenticity of Maori genealogies, showing that the genealogies, as given by the Maoris, Rarotongans, Hawaiians, Morioris, Samoans, are alike, carrying back the genealogy for at least a thousand years. Mr. Stowell then proceeds:—Vast though the subject be, and wide the interval of space and of time, unfettered by cataclysmal disasters and terrestrial changes, the mind of the Tohunga-ariki, or adept, of less than one hundred years ago, could grasp with clearness the principles of creation which had been handed down as a legacy from his forefathers; he could explain the evolution and involution of a germ, how it was affected by its surrounding elements, and what those elements consisted of; he could describe the contents of the universe, recite how the stars were sown throughout space, their order and class, and the forces which keep them suspended and circling in their respective spheres; he could point to the four parts of the "girdle of the sky," and tell us that even these points participated in the unceasing motion visible elsewhere; he would state that far beyond the "column of the sky," or milky way, new worlds were ever being created, and that Rehua-Sirius is recorded to have rushed in brilliance through the dark opening near Tamarereti, or Southern Cross, on the way to his present position in the sky. He would assert that all material and visible phenomena were hastening onwards to their final equilibrium at the instance of the Kahui-kore; that as man was born of his mother—the earth—so he returns again to her; that the flesh of man encases the spirit, and that the spirit encases the soul; that as the spirit does not perish with the body, so the soul does not necessarily perish with the spirit. Turning to personal history, he would state that his ancestors had dwelt in New Zealand from time immemorial; that his progenitors had originally belonged to a large country, the borders of which almost

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extended to New Zealand; that the principal part of that country was suddenly submerged by subterranean forces, and that a large proportion of the people of his race perished; and at the same time, historical buildings containing the records, history, and all other treasures were lost. That that country is now represented by the various islands in the Pacific, known as Hawa, Tongatapu, Tongarewa, Tonga-uru, Tongawhiti, Tawhiti, Whiti, Kuparu, Wawauatea, Rangiatea, Hamua, Maunu, Manono, Aromangata, Aromanga-wahine, Pakura, Tarawa, Tutuhira, Rarotonga, Omanaia, Waerota, Tokeaa, Aorangi, Matatera, Rarohenga, and Nukuroa (the ancient name of New Zealand). That since that cataclysm, which affected also New Zealand, some islands have from time to time disappeared, while others have reappeared. That in the course of time New Zealand, whose people then led a quiet and uninteresting life, was re-visited from the islands, and communication re-established throughout these ancient borders of the old kingdom. That since communication was re-established, New Zealand has been regularly visited from the islands, and that voyagers have also proceeded thither from New Zealand. And that finally the latest voyagers came here eighteen generations ago. These are among the chief outlines of Maori history, and there is still extant abundant evidences connected therewith, giving more or less detail. In conclusion, I would suggest that if ever the origin and history of the Maori people is, as far as practicable, put into a connected form, that history will point with the finger of fidelity to the great question of "the origin of the human race."

Analogy between a Theosophist and a Railway Train.

The train is the Theosophist with all his possibilities. The track is Ancient Wisdom. The destination is the temple of wisdom. The lubricating oil is the Theosophical Society, enabling the train to make better time on the road. The stations are the degrees of advancement on the way to the temple. The friction and obstacles encountered are the man's kamic nature. The

friction is necessary to progress, otherwise the wheels would spin around and the train remain motionless. If the obstruction is too great, the train jumps the track and there is a wreck. The headlight is Higher Manas, throwing light upon the road; showing the engineer, Lower Manas, the dangers of the way. The conductor is Buddhi, having a wider view, and a knowledge of the movements of other trains. He discriminates between the passengers, deeming some—the dead-beats and tramps of human nature—unfit to go forward; for the passengers are virtues and vices. It is an accommodation train. It stops at way stations and takes on a passenger or lets one get off. Atma represents the intelligence of the conductor and engineer, and the illuminating power of the headlight and the force of the steam generated from the fire and water. The intelligence and the light and the steam are merely potential, until each is applied to its appropriate vehicle. The Master is the superintendent of the road. The Primeval Sons of Light are the company. This Theosophic train stops over night and rests. It runs seven days on a circular track, and is then run into the engine house and is held in reserve for a week. No baggage is checked through on this line.

S. E. PALMER.

T. S. ECHOES.

REPORTS OF BRANCHES.

CHICAGO, ILL.—Chicago Branch closed its regular season for public work on June 29th. We will resume the first Wednesday in September, and it is to be hoped that we will resume together. The members are by no means regular at the meetings. Cannot our good friends think of some way to make members turn out? One member has volunteered to be at the rooms every Wednesday evening during the "rest," so that anyone dropping in may meet with a welcome, and receive any attention necessary. Our dear Miss Stevens has been away from us several weeks. She went for a rest and unfortunately has her vacation on the sick list. A letter from her this week tells of improvement, and we hope to see her again in a few weeks. Our members are scattered variously and I hope they are all toning up for the winter's work. P. G. K.

CHICAGO, ILL.—The National Committee held its July meeting on the fifth of the month; but little business was transacted, although a quorum was present. We are hardly settled down to work as yet, but getting into line and feeling the way for the future. We have tried a personal correspondence scheme,

each member writing to four or five branches, but answers are slow. Why, oh why, don't T. S. secretaries and members answer letters? Perhaps the hot weather makes it difficult for them to write now, and may be the autumn breezes will freshen them up a bit. However, we will write them until they do answer. The committee has changed its meeting from the first Tuesday to the first Saturday of each month, and has also elected two new members.

PAULINE G. KELLY.

CHICAGO, July 17.—The Eastern Psychology Lodge has not been represented in the columns of MERCURY heretofore, though we have not been in a state of pralaya. Its members are few, but actuated by a definite purpose. We have been working at a disadvantage, owing to the feeling of antagonism against Theosophy in our locality. In fact one of the divines of the vicinity gives a so-called expose of Theosophy from his pulpit this evening. We have clung to life with such tenacity that we are now gaining a foothold, and are experiencing a steady growth in attendance of visitors, with a sincere interest. Several have expressed a desire to join our "Ancient Wisdom" class, with the intention of remaining steadfast to their beloved churches. We feel that it will be only a question of time, however, when they will join hands with us. Several members have adopted individual methods of work. Mrs. Havens, our president, has found several opportunities for good articles in the widely read daily papers; she is a forceful woman, with an intelligent perception, and has a lucid manner of giving out knowledge. Another member, when riding upon the cars, studies faces with the intention of presenting Theosophical literature to such as she may suppose to be able to digest it. We have finished most of the manuals and are now studying "Ancient Wisdom." We have adopted the plan of reading a half chapter at a time. Each member in turn becomes leader, proposes questions upon what has been read, and then we review the whole chapter when finished. Then each one will write a short paper, reduce the whole into as few words as possible, telling to the others what he or she has found in it; the result is, that there is little in it that we do not know, having the benefit of each other's gleanings. Our work has been guided by Mrs. M. L. Brainard, whom we all love, and who infuses new life by her scholarly and spiritual talks. She leaves us this week for Green Bay, Wis. Aside from her wonderful philosophical teachings, she diffuses "peace and good will." With kindest greetings, I am, fraternally,

KATE VAN ALLEN.

DETROIT, MICH.—The Detroit Theosophical Society has adjourned for its midsummer vacation, and will resume its regular class work the third Tuesday in September. The Society received its charter last autumn, after which two or three meetings were held in an irregular way, a few papers were read, and then the work was virtually abandoned. In April, Mr. F. E. Titus most opportunely put in his appearance. A reorganization and, we might say, a material resurrection (as the Society was really defunct), was the result. New members and new officers were elected, constitution and by-laws adopted, a definite, systematic plan of study and work arranged. As a result, a healthful growth of the Society and an individual interest in the work have been established, which have been constantly increasing. The Branch selected as a text-book the "Ancient Wisdom" by Annie Besant. Meetings were held every Tuesday, evening, the last meeting in each month, or such portion of it as was necessary.

being devoted to business. All meetings for class work were private, the Society meeting one month at the home of a member, and then passing on to the home of another. Lessons from the text-book were outlined and assigned for class study one week in advance, thus making the work definite, and, as we found, much more interesting and satisfactory. During the study-hour, the Branch was in charge of the teacher selected, and the time was devoted exclusively to the study of the topic, no outside or irrelevant talk or discussion being permitted. In June, a feast of good things Theosophical came to us. Mrs. M. C. Lincoln of Buffalo, N. Y., gave us four lectures. To say that we were interested and delighted with her, is but expressing ourselves mildly. June 19th, her lecture was "Theosophy and its Practical Application;" June 20th, "Karma;" June 21st, "The Power of Thought," one of the most learned and scientific lectures on this metaphysical topic that it has ever been our pleasure to hear. Sunday evening, June 26th, Mr. Titus and Mrs. Lincoln were both with us. Mr. Titus lectured on "Theosophy, the Religion of Science." Mrs. Lincoln's subject was, "New Ideas." Following these lectures, three new members were elected to membership, and several more will make application in September. The library forwarded to us from headquarters is being used freely. We expect soon to be able to return it and apply for the advanced set. We send greetings to our fellows. Fraternally, M. V. MEDDAUGH, M. D.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.—The Ishwara Branch is still keeping up its good work and excellent record, the hot weather seeming to make little difference in the attendance. In looking over the books, we find that twelve sets of the "Secret Doctrine" have been purchased by members of our Branch, and record the sale of thirty-five of the "Ancient Wisdom," besides a number of sets of the manuals. We have had articles on Theosophy published in the papers, and the classes started in Fargo, by Mrs. Davis, are doing well, and not one cent has been contributed from the propaganda fund. All our work and effort is given gratis by our members. Our Friday evening study class is doing splendid work and several St. Paul members are in attendance nearly every week, and our hearts are delighted with the number of earnest souls we find along the way. We expect to do good work this winter, and are already planning the program. Our branch acknowledges with many thanks the gift of pamphlets from the Pacific Coast. May the hand of good fellowship and fraternal love unite us all in its tender embrace. H. C. D., Sec'y.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION, July, 1898.—The Auckland Branch has accepted with regret the resignation of the secretary, Mr. W. H. Draffin, who has held that position since the formation of the Branch, but who is unable, owing to pressure of work in other directions, to continue to do so. In his place has been elected Mr. W. Will, also for a long time connected with the Branch. His address is, West street, Newton, Auckland. The Section is getting along very quietly, and there is not much of importance to mention. Mrs. Besant's "Ancient Wisdom" is being extensively used by most of the Branches as a text-book for study, and "The Chicago Scheme" is also popular and has been found valuable. Public lectures continue to be given regularly at the various Branches. In Wellington, Mrs. Richmond's lectures are attracting fair audiences; many of those coming to them are considerably interested and attend the meetings regularly.

HONOLULU, June 8, 1898.—All is well here and work is progressing as usual, under the direction of our indefatigable president, Dr. A. Marques. The two last meetings of our H. P. B. Class have been given up to the discussion of the "Theosophical Treatment of Drunkards," and "The Possibility of Combining Theosophy and Business." The advanced class has finished "Ancient Wisdom," and has taken up the "Secret Doctrine" alternately with the "Human Aura."

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., Golden Gate Lodge, August.—We will ask our dear MERCURY, whose winged feet carry him to distant lands, to take our loving greetings to our fellow workers over all the world. We are here working under many difficulties, on these remote shores of the new and crude civilization of the western world, but we *are working*, and each month takes us a little further along the path. As our work assumes a more substantial form, we are constantly adding to the attractiveness of our public meetings. Our Sunday evenings are now animated by congregational singing, a good choir, and fine soloists. We have also a new organ for the use of the Lotus Circle. The following Sunday evening lectures have been given during the month. "The Christ of the Mystic," by Dr. Brackett; "Heaven and Hell," by Miss N. Dashiell; "Visions, Seership and Hallucinations," and also "Dreams," by Miss Walsh. We all feel that we are gaining in that earnest consecration, without which all our efforts are vain, and with which all things are possible. We ask our distant brothers and sisters to unite with us in the hope that the coming year may open to us new avenues of usefulness, through which our united energies may run to bless the world.

BOOK REVIEWS.

The Song of Universal Brotherhood. Illustrated poem by Nellie E. Dashiell. Price 50 cents. Coming Light Publishing Company, 621 O'Farrell street, San Francisco, Cal.

In these troublous days, when the very air is vibrant with discords, this Song of Brotherhood speaks right to the heart. It is sung by one who feels with a woman's soul the evils and woes born of separateness, and who seeks with a poet's vision the blessed destiny of our nation, "to awaken and save," and to establish that federation of peoples which will be the foundation of a true brotherhood. The artist has caught the spirit of the author, so that "the song" appeals to the eye as well as to the heart, and makes a dainty and appropriate gift book.

Scientific Corroborations of Theosophy. Price 15 cents.

The publication, by MERCURY PUBLISHING OFFICE, of the fourth edition of that interesting pamphlet, by our co-worker, Dr. A. Marques, is known to have been very timely and to have produced many good results, because, although not intended for scientists, it still appeals very forcibly to all people scientifically trained, who happen to be leaning toward Theosophy without realizing the scientific claims of the Wisdom Religion. Cases have been reported of whole T. S. Branches, wavering under the spell of indifference, whose interest in the study has been revived by the timely appearance of "Scientific Corroborations," and the further appreciation of the value of that essay has been shown by the numerous quotations, and even complete translations, made in different countries and various languages—Italian, French, German, Spanish and several Hindoo vernaculars. The latest reports show that Dr. Marques' essay has been taken as a basis for some very interesting lectures made in Auckland and Sydney by the general secretaries of both the New Zealand and Australian Sections, as well as for papers read in various branches. The pamphlet published by MERCURY has thus been proven by experience to be an excellent one for distribution to enquirers. In the meantime, as new "corroborations" are constantly coming out in all the scientific publications, all members of the T. S. scientifically inclined ought to make it a duty to look for the forthcoming ones, and to collect those that they discover, so as to have them serve as a basis to some future complementary publications in imitation of Dr. Marques' pioneer work, which, as Mrs. Besant says, "is quite worthy of imitation, every student thereby helping to raise the cairn to H. P. B.'s memory, and to affirm the authority of her teachings."

Sema-Kanda, Threshold Memories, a mystical story by Coulson Turnbull. Price \$1.25. Purdy Publishing Co., McVickers Building, Chicago.

The story, if these memories can be called a story, opens in Atlantis, just before the entire destruction of the remnants of that continent. The lovers, Sema-Kanda and Posidona, are initiated into the sacred mysteries, and are among those of the mystic brotherhood who went forth from Atlantis to instruct the infant peoples of the new lands beyond Atlantis. Sema-Kanda is seen next as Giordano Bruno, and Posidona as the poet Bernardi. They meet in a dungeon of Venice, and their martyrdom by the Inquisition makes a graphic picture. The reader catches a glimpse of them again on the western prairies, but it is a mere glimpse—more of an impression than a picture. Finally, they appear in modern dress. The prosy, matter-of-fact life of to-day contrasts painfully with the fascinating beauty of the temple life of Atlantis, while the ignorance and frivolity of modern society are pitiful, compared with the wisdom and earnestness of those far off-times. The reader feels inclined to sigh: "How are the mighty fallen!" If such be the lesson the writer wishes to teach, he teaches it well.

MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS.

Theosophy in Australasia (May) is quite up to its usual standard. We are sorry to learn that there is any hesitancy on the part of T. S. members in Australia to support their official organ. It is only through this means that the scattered branches and detached members can be kept in touch with each other.

The expense is so very small that it need not interfere with the support of our leading literary magazines, which we also need to keep us in touch with the movement throughout the world. *Theosophy in Australasia* is a very attractive little monthly and well edited. It has persevered through its first three years, which is the most critical period in the history of a magazine, as in the life of a child. We have no doubt that, from this time on, it will receive the hearty support it so richly deserves. What we need, after all, is not more money to carry on our various activities, but greater zeal for the work.

Teosofia (June). Our little Italian organ gives about two pages of Dr. Marques' valuable work, "Scientific Corroborations of Theosophy," translated by Signorina Olga Giaccone; it also continues the translation of "Spiritualism in the Light of Theosophy," by the Countess Wachtmeister. Signor Aureli writes on "Solidarity."

Balder, Christiania, Norway (May), continues the translations of Mr. Leadbeater's "Invisible Helpers." The translation of Mrs. Besant's "Ancient Wisdom" has reached the chapter on the "Mental Plane." In the "Outlook," notice is given of the Count Wachtmeister's visit and lectures in Stockholm; also of the generosity of the Countess Wachtmeister. The June, July and August numbers of this faithful little paper have been delayed on account of the third convention of the Scandinavian Section, which was held with great success in May.

The Brahmavadin, No. 17, contains an editorial on the relation between the teacher and the disciple, in which the position of the teacher is exalted to such an elevated position, that it makes him an object of worship on the part of the disciple. A sermon by the Swami Abhayānanda is reprinted from "The Sunday Inter-ocean," from which we quote: "The Vedānta Philosophy looks upon all men as truth-seekers, upon all religions, creeds, dogmas, ideas, as different roads, straight or crooked, followed by different minds to reach the one and same goal, viz: Truth or God." Great progress is reported in the Vedānta missionary work in New York. Notice is also given of the death of Mr. B. R. Rajam Aiyar, editor of *Awakened India*, which we regret will be discontinued after an existence of two years.

Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society (June), is mostly taken up with a well written paper on "The Ethics of Buddha," which closes with the following words: "The practical and humane teaching of Buddha establishes the brotherhood of man without distinction of caste or color; it elevates man into a nobler nature, and raises woman to equality with man; it incites man to practice compassion toward all living creatures, and stops the destruction of animals for food." We also find an account of the inauguration of Sanghamitta Convent in Colombo, organized under the leadership of the Countess Canavarro.

Rays of Light, Colombo, Ceylon (June). This little sheet is always a welcome visitor. We see by its short paper on "Debt and Dandyism," that the habits of the youths of Ceylon are very like those of our land in these degenerate modern times. May *Rays of Light* continue to shine on the darkness of this material age.

The Theosophic Gleaner (June), contains a very good paper on "Auto-Suggestion," by A. R., who quotes a Chicago editor: "There is no power on earth so potent for steadying over-taxed nerves, as auto-suggestion. When other men take alcohol, I brace my nerves resolutely, sit still for a moment or two, and

suggest to myself that I am all right. And very shortly I am all right too. Insomnia can be cured in the same way, and likewise as easily. To effect this purpose for myself, I simply suggest that I am sleepy, I am dozing, I am sinking into sleep. Almost immediately I do sleep. I have cured myself of insomnia in this manner, when all other remedies have proved useless." In "Notes and News," we find the following: "The latest malady laid at the door of the long suffering micro-organism is sun-stroke. Dr. Sambon, writing to the *British Medical Journal*, thinks that sun-stroke is an infectious disease, due to specific organisms in the superficial layers of the soil, and spread over certain well defined geographical areas, where they are inhaled as dust."

Hindu Boys' Journal (June). We are glad to see an improvement in this excellent little monthly, in the direction of articles written in a style more attractive to its youthful readers. The papers have been too heavy, and only suitable for mature minds.

The World's Advance Thought, Portland, Oregon (June and July). Mrs. Mallory, the publisher and editor of this bright little sheet, has a keen perception of the truth. Her editorials are good exponents of the advance thought of the present time.

The Exodus, New York, (July). This is another little monthly edited by a woman of rare attainments, whose works are attracting a good deal of attention. Ursula N. Gestefeld has the gift of presenting truth in a way that is very helpful and inspiring. *The Exodus* shows a more exalted spirit of devotion than any of the other numerous monthlies of its kind.

Self Knowledge, Baltimore, Md. (March and May). Still another monthly "devoted to the unfoldment of the divinity in humanity," edited and published by a woman, Pearl Battee Doty, who is also president of the, Battee Institute of Self-knowledge, whose aim is "to unfold the highest possibilities on all planes of consciousness," which we think is undertaking to do more than is required of any one organization.

Meatless Dishes. We have received this little pamphlet, published by the "Chicago Vegetarian," containing a variety of attractive receipts.

Success, Washington, D. C. A new monthly paper, devoted to the mind, matter, money, soul, science and sense.

We have also to acknowledge the receipt of *Voice of Labor*, *The Coming Light*, *The Realm*, *Prasnotlara*, *The Vahan*, *Die Uebersinnliche Welt*, *The Christian Life*, *The Pacific Unitarian*, *The Berean Herald*, *The Temple*, *The Philosophical Journal*, *The Altruist*, *The Woman's Tribune*, *Human Nature*.

NOTICES.

WANTED, to complete files, several copies of *Mercury*, Vol. I, No. 2. Address MERCURY PUBLISHING OFFICE, room 7, Odd Fellows' Building, San Francisco.

WANTED.—To purchase the first five volumes of "The Path," either bound or unbound. Address Mrs. Albin E. Lang, 2268 Ashland Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

A subscriber, on August 11th, renews subscription to *Mercury*, enclosing a dollar bill. The letter came unsigned, addressed to MERCURY OFFICE, in care of W. J. Walters, manager, but unfortunately the sender is unknown, and the post mark on the outside of the envelope is so indistinct that it cannot be deciphered.

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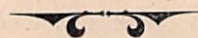
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